THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSIC RAGTIME

P.O. BOX 8 KING, ONT., CANADA

Vol. 1, No. 5. July, 1962

The first thing we thought you might like to hear about this issue, is membership. We have members from many countries of the world, including England, France, Switzerland and Sweden. We would like to welcome one new subscriber in particular, who must surely be our most distant one. He is Mr. N. R. Stone, of Hobart, Tasmania. I met Mr. Stone in Toronto during a recent visit. We have the greatest admiration for our 'distant' subscribers. I think many of us in North America feel that we pursue our interest in ragtime quite alone, with few friends who share our enthusiasm. However, our position is in no way comparable to those people who are in Europe (and Tasmania). We have enough trouble acquiring rolls, music, records, etcetera: think what their troubles are. While on the subject of new subscribers,- we always welcome, and need more. We have a supply of printed 3" x 5" cards, as the one enclosed, describing the Society's aims if any of you would like some to send to possible new adherents. We also are always pleased to send the current copy of the bulletin to any new potential subscribers whose names you send us.

Performers.

Bob Darch did not return to Toronto for the month of June. The engagement at the new Club 76 in Winnipeg was a smash success. Winnipeg's gain was Toronto's loss. Bob returned to Toronto for the last two weeks only of June, and left on July 1st for the Dawson City Gold Rush Festival - but more of that below. About August 20, Bob goes to the Holiday Inn in Joplin, Missouri, returning to Toronto about the middle of October.

Johnny Maddox is currently at Club 76 in Toronto and will remain there until August 27 when he opens at the Guildwood Inn at Sarnia (Ontario) for two weeks.

The great news for us Canadians is that replacing Bob Darch in Winnipeg is Trebor Tichenor and his group, consisting of himself on piano, Al Stricker on banjo and Don Franz on tuba. Treb plays Winnipeg for about a month, maybe longer, and then, we hope, comes to Toronto. Since both clubs belong to the same person, we hope to see Treb. We've heard him on a tape and his playing is excellent.

Wally Rose is still in San Francisco as far as we know. Karl Leaf plays piano with Don Obertone on banjo at the Brass Knob in Ventura, Cal. We haven't heard of Ray Rose since he was in Omaha.

Special Events.

As we stated last issue, Tom and Betty Jane Owen played an excellent concert last month in Erie, Penna. This was not a concert for Erie's Ragtime fans, but was for an alumni group, the majority of whom knew little or nothing about classic ragtime. Both Tom and Betty Jane played, and Tom also doubled as narrator. They traced the history and development of Ragtime, and played many fine examples of the Classic Rag.

We have also heard from Bill Mitchell with whom most of you will be familiar via his most delightfulcolumn, "Elite Syncopations" (which appears in Jazz Report), of the Golden Era of Jazz Concert which was held on June 22nd in Ventura, Cal. The concert was sponsored by the Ventura Teen Club, and featured three main sections. The first section consisted of 8 traditional Dixieland numbers played by the Levee Stompers. The third section of later numbers was ably rendered by Jim Hubbart's modern Jazz Group and featured Ed Montudi Garland on base.

The second section with which we are mainly concerned consisted of 10 Classic numbers by Bill Mitchell and Karl Leaf. Bill Solo'd with Grace & Beauty, The Pearls, Euphonic Sounds, and Yellow Dog Blues. Karl solo'd with Southpaw Serenade, Mood Indigo, and Like Young. They then combined their talent in duets of Little Rock Getaway, Honky Tonk Train, and Maple Leaf Rag. Bill tells us that the whole programme was well received and that Classic Ragtime got more than a passing nod. Congratulations !

Among the acknowledgements was one to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Affeldt for their help in making the concert possible. Paul has been a friend of ragtime from way back, as any of you will know who have read his earlier articles on ragtime in Jazz Report. As we mentionned in one of our earlier newsletters, it was through Paul's efforts that we have Brun Campbell's wonderful playing on the Euphonic Label 'The Professors'.

Let us hear of your concerts in advance, as well as the review afterwards.

The last 'Special Event'.is the Dawson City Gold Rush Festival, now under way in Dawson City, Yukon Territory. The Festival committee has provided us with sufficient copies of their excellent brochure . You will see for yourselves what an exciting and fascinating festival this will be, so we will not attempt to discuss it in detail in this letter. Needless to say, for those of you who have the time and the money, this would be an unforgettable trip. We will try to give you some opinions of Society members who are going to the Festival. Bob Darch has had his famous Cornish 5 pedal Upright Saloon Grand flown in for his engagement, and he will be playing in the Red Feather Saloon, where he originally found his piano many years ago under a pile of junk. To give you an idea of the distance involved, Dawson City is about 1800 air miles north west of Edmonton !

Sheet Music.

We would like to thank the people who wrote us about our music re-printing efforts. We are barely breaking even, but the group of people who want music is growing daily - we hope it continues to do so. If enough people want them, we will try to print 2 pices this time, both by ragtime greats:

1. Frog Legs Rag by James Scott $ 1.00 ppd.

2. St. Louis Rag by Tom Turpin $ 1.00 ppd.

(continued)

Sheet Music (cont.)

We are proud of the reproduction of our last number, 'Elite Syncopations'. All future sheet music will be exactly the same size and quality.

One of our subscribers, Joe Smith, of Scarsdale, N.y., who just happens to be 13 years old, and who, in our opinion, is remarkably astute, writes as follows:

> " About the Society re-issues, I think you are doing a fine job, your choices of music were among the best rags. The only reason that I can think of that you're not getting orders is that Original Rags was an inconveniently small size, and maybe your members were afraid that Elite would be also. As it turned out, Elite was much larger and easier to read than Original Rags, however the members who did not buy it do not know this. "

We're wondering how right Joe is. Original Rags was printed on paper not quite 8 x 10 inches. The negatives were made from a Thermofax copy. Elite Syncopations, however, was printed on slightly heavier paper of about 9½ x 12½ inches, and its negatives were shot from the original edition. This turned out to be far superior to our first effort, and as mentionned all future Society editions will be as 'Elite' which is 'perfect copy'.

We hope to publish SunFlower Slow Drag in September. We mention this now as we want to include in this bulletin some written remarks by John Stark about this tune. You all know what a dedicated Ragtime enthusiast (so much so, that it ruined him) was John Stark. What you may not know is what an excellent writer he was. Here is his advertising copy about SunFlower Slow Drag:

> We knew a pianist who had in her repertoire, "The Maple Leaf", "SunFlower Slow Drag", "The Entertainer", and "Elite Syncopations". She had played them as she thought, over and over for her own pleasure, and other's, until at last she had laid them aside as passe. But it chanced that she incidentally dropped into a store one day where Joplin was playing "The Sun Flower Slow Drag". She was instantly struck with its unique and soulful story, and - what do you think, she asked someone what it was. She had played over it and around it for 12 months and had never touched it. She went home and began to practise it, as though she had never seen it before. It breathed a new life and spoke a new language, as did also the other three pieces. Mark this - the besetting sin is in trying to play these classics too fast - there is nothing in common with these inventions and the flood of Rags, Drags and Jags on the market. We want to speak here especially of the "Sun Flower Slow Drag" ; this piece came to light during the high temperature of Scott Joplin's courtship, and while he was touching the ground only in the highest places, his geese were all swans, and Mississippi water tasted like honeydew; his exuberance made Monroe Rosenfeld's most effervescent moods appear but gloomy weather, and Sam Speck - but never mind. If there ever was a song without words, this is that article; hold your ear to the ground while someone plays it, and you can hear Scott Joplin's heartbeat. It has been said by many that there will never be another "Maple Leaf", but we say to you with all the assurance that was ours in springing that sensation, that "The Sun Flower Slow Drag" has it bested in a finer continuity, a more ingenious treatment of a theme that is heart-searching. These pieces will repay the most painstaking study and

practice; they will not go out of style or fashion while Chopin lasts; they are as permanent as the everlasting hills, at least . . . as far as this generation is concerned.

Get the "SunFlower Slow Drag".

L.P. Records

Coming: Bob Darch's record "The Golden Reunion in Ragtime" will be released in late August, - not June as we prveiously reported. The decision was made not to release the record during the summer. The record business, like many others, is slower during the summer months.

Player Piano Rolls:

The only news we have this month about rolls is the new Q.R.S #9857 which is their 2nd Scott Joplin Medley, of The Entertainer, and Joplin's New Rag. We hope to give you some news soon about our plans to produce player piano rolls. With luck we will have something to tell you in the next newsletter. We are wondering though, how many "roll enthusiasts" we have among our readers ? If there are enough of you, we might be able to prevail on Mike Montgomery to head up something regular in the roll department. Mike, has one of the better, if not the best, ragtime piano roll collections, and is to boot, an authority on their early production. So let's hear from you on rolls. Interested ?

Remember to let us know if you want Frog Legs and St. Louis Rags in sheet.

Please note: our next newsletter will be mailed out around the end of August. Our secretary, Jim Kinnear, will be away from his desk for about 5 weeks, so if your mail is not promptly answered, please bear with us until Jim returns.

Back Copies:

Those of you who do not have complete back issues of the Ragtime Society's newsletters will be glad to know that because of persistent demands, we have reprinted the out-of-print numbers. Write in for the ones you are missing. These were a 1 page letter in January stating our aims, the February Vol.1 no.1.; March Voll.1.no.2; April Vol.1.no.3 and June Vol.1 no.4

John A. Fisher,
Chairman.